

# Total Nutrition

## Take A “Magic Carpet” Ride

by *Mindy Hermann, R.D.*

(NAPSA)—A few years ago, a magazine editor asked me to write about the 10 “best” foods for families. How could I choose? No one food supplies everything the body needs, and each food brings its own unique combination of important nutrients. Then I came up with the idea of “magic carpet” foods, foods that are important because they “carry” other nutritious foods with them.



**Mindy Hermann**

Breakfast cereal is one of my favorite magic carpet foods. A fortified cereal such as Whole Grain Total® is a terrific food on its own—it supplies fiber and 100 percent of the daily value for 12 different vitamins and minerals. Eat it topped with milk and fresh fruit, or layer it in a parfait with yogurt, berries and nuts, and you have an even more nutrient-packed meal.

Pizza crust is another favorite because it can carry a variety of foods on it. It's easy to make your own, or you can buy dough or ready-baked crust at your market. Spread your dough with tomato sauce and you've added lycopene, a plant compound that gives tomatoes their red color and that may help boost health. “Decorate your crust with plenty of vegetables to add to the goal of eating more fruits and vegetables,” suggests Georgia Kostas, M.P.H., R.D., L.D., author of “The Cooper Clinic Solution to the Diet Revolution.” “Eating 4½ cups a day provides the antioxidants, fiber and

phytonutrients that may help reduce cholesterol oxidation and hardening of the arteries, which can contribute to a lower risk of heart disease.”

Pasta easily makes my list—the variety of toppings and “mix-ins” is virtually endless, such as lycopene-rich tomato sauce; protein-packed lean ground meat or poultry, grilled salmon and other fish; reduced-fat ricotta cheese or grated cheese for protein and calcium; heart-healthy nuts such as walnuts; and, of course, vegetables. Try different types of pasta; for example, fiber-containing whole wheat spaghetti, thin buckwheat soba from Japan, Asian rice noodles, and even pastalike spaghetti squash.

My list has plenty of other foods, including soup, bread made with whole grain, baked potato, and corn tortillas. Which foods would be on your list?

### Ask Mindy

**Q: Can you suggest other types of “magic carpet” foods from different food groups?**

**A:** How about lettuce and salad greens? Mix in ingredients from as many food groups as possible for a filling and nutrition-packed meal.

### “Magic Carpet” Salad

Toss baby lettuce (vegetable) with raisins and chopped apples (fruit), grated Parmesan cheese (dairy), kidney beans (protein) and chopped peanuts (protein). Top with a drizzle of dressing and sprinkle with Whole Grain Total® (whole grain) for crunch. T